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2nd St., New York
acre 5-2937-8
address: ACANP

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Albert Parry
ing Editor
ert E. Kahn
ial Consultants
ert Dell
f. F. L. Schuman
and Stowe
ndrik van Loon
the Williams

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ITALIAN FASCIST GROUPS ACTIVE IN U. S.

Try to Convert and Organize

In the last few months the activity of Italian fascist groups in the United States has been definitely on the increase. Among other signs of this intensification of effort is the recent formation of the so-called Committee pro-Italian Language. The name of the organization is innocent enough but the function is not. The Committee is aimed at a coordination of all cultural pro-fascist activities in clubs, schools, committees, etc.

Majority of Italians in U. S. Are Anti-Fascists

Italian fascism is well aware that the majority of Italians living in the United States are strong anti-fascists, and Italian fascism is trying hard to make converts of them. In this work of "persuasion," subtle methods are sometimes employed. The Committee pro-Italian Language is an example of one of the more subtle methods. Its appeal is directed toward the "numerous friends of the Italian language." It is hoped that numbers of the lovers of the Italian tongue will be drawn into such an organization and will thereby become ultimately involved in pro-fascist activities.

Italian Consul Heads Fascist Drive

Although the Committee pro-Italian Language has a sufficiently inoffensive name, the outfit is not lacking in revealing fascistic earmarks. The Committee was formed under the auspices of the Italian Consul General, Commendatore Gaetano Vecchiotti. On May 2, members of the Committee met under the chairmanship of Vecchiotti at the Italian Consulate in Palazzo d'Italia, Rockefeller Center, New York. Reports of the Committee's activities during the month of April were submitted and discussed; it was pointed out, among other things, that the number of schools which have become affiliated with the Committee is rapidly increasing.

Present at this meeting at the Consulate were some of the outstanding Italian fascist propagandists in the United States: Domenico Trombetta, editor of the vigorously anti-Semitic fascist weekly, Il Grido della Stirpe; Dr. Vinzo Comito, fascist radio commentator, who

was barred from station WHOM because of his pro-fascist talks; and Count Giovanni Billi, well known for his considerable activity in the fascist Order of Sons of Italy in America.

Network of Blackshirt Clubs

No less indicative are some of the clubs now affiliated with the Committee pro-Italian Language. Among them are: Mario Sonzini Club (named after a fascist "hero"); Imperial Rome Club, as fascist a body as its name implies; Nicola Bonservizi Club, one of whose purposes is "to prepare our children to become pure citizens of the Italian race of tomorrow"; Antonio Locatelli Club, named after a fascist aviator famed for his telegram to Mussolini in which he approved the murder of Matteotti, and prominently displaying in its vestibule a bas-relief of Il Duce and the Roman Eagle; and Dopolavoro Dux that proclaims among its other purposes "the worship of the land of our birth and its Duce."

Speaking on April 23, before the members of the Dopolavoro Dux, Consul Vecchiotti gave a clear picture of the reasons for which the Committee pro-Italian Language has been formed, when he said,

"Il Duce has condensed the duty of the Italians in these few words: 'Work and Arms.' For us, Italians living abroad, the word 'arms' should signify a continuous, stubborn propaganda among the people of other races to clarify the sound Italian policy which has always aimed at preserving peace, and to explain our sacred rights, which were always denied, but which Italy cannot renounce without losing her importance of great power and endangering the life and development of her people."

In a more recent speech to another of the Committee's affiliates, the Consul, after emphasizing the "great accomplishments" of Italian fascism, told his listeners that they should indeed "feel proud of their Fatherland, Italy, which under the guidance of Il Duce marches with firm step toward higher destinies."

Anti-Fascist Italians in Opposition

The disguise under which the Committee pro-Italian Language was inaugurated is already wearing off. Prominent Italian-American citizens who were at first deceived as to the Committee's real purpose and some of whom were drawn into its work, now see the organization for what it is. They have attacked the Committee and are publicly exposing its role.

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GERMAN CONSUL IN PHILADELPHIA UNEASY AFTER THE HOUR EXPOSE

One of the consequences of the recent exposé in The Hour (May 18) of Nazi activity in Philadelphia is that Erich Windels, German Consul in that city, has issued to the press a statement denying his acquaintance with "any Bund organization in Philadelphia." Nevertheless, as The Hour previously indicated, Herr Windels is thoroughly familiar with the activities of the Kyffhauser Bund, has cooperated with its Chairman, Karl Schumacher, and has taken an active part in various other Nazi efforts.

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SUIT BY DEATHERAGE DISMISSED

The "Brains" of U. S. Fascism Will Not Be Discouraged, Nevertheless

The libel suit brought by George Deatherage, former chief of the fascistic Knights of the White Camellia, against Stanley High and the Saturday Evening Post (see The Hour for April 27, page 3) is dismissed in the Federal Court at Charleston. The Judge's order is that Deatherage must pay the costs of the case before he can reinstitute the suit.

Deatherage's Engineering Skill

We are also informed that the W. K. Ferguson Company of Cleveland, Ohio, which employs Deatherage as an engineer, is aware of his fascistic activities. To the inquiries by certain public-spirited individuals as to the reasons for Deatherage's employment despite his known connections with Nazi Germany, the executives of the Company privately reply that Deatherage is "an extremely able engineer," and that the Company keeps an eye on him lest his political activities become too obnoxious. It is recalled that at one time Deatherage was in charge of construction for the Carbide and Carbon Chemical Corporation of South Charleston, West Virginia, but lost his job when his fascistic activities first became pronounced. We learn that the Nazis from the very beginning valued Deatherage's sympathetic interest in their movement not only because he was an American but also because he was an engineer. They often coupled his name with that of Anton Adriaan Mussert, the well-known Dutch engineer in charge of all the waterworks in the strategic city of Utrecht, Holland, who combined his undoubtedly high engineering abilities with leadership of the Netherlands Nazi Party.

Use of Swastika -- Other Ties With Nazis

Deatherage openly used the sign of swastika in the News Bulletin, the organ of his American Nationalist Confederation. When the sign first appeared in the Spring of 1938, he called his readers' attention to it by writing in the leading editorial: "This issue carries at the masthead our newly selected emblem -- the swastika." In the Summer of 1938 Dr. Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment invited Deatherage to attend a conference of foreign agents of the World-Service, the notorious Nazi propaganda organization. Accepting the invitation, Deatherage came to Erfurt, Germany, where the conference was held. Introduced as an American delegate, he delivered a talk to the Nazis and pro-Nazis assembled by Goebbels. Deatherage's theme was: "Will America be the Jews' Waterloo?" Late in May, 1939, testifying before the Dies Committee, Deatherage admitted his link with Fascists of Italy, but said he had been "rebuffed" by the members of the Nazi embassy in Washington when he had sought to establish closer connections with them. He did not, however, tell the Committee of his trip to Erfurt (see The Hour for May 30, 1939). He said that he had "a hazy recollection" that he had once made a speech or prepared an article with the title used in Erfurt, but tried to make it appear that he had merely sent a copy of such a speech or article to the Nazis, without necessar-



ily actually making the trip to the Reich. He did not dispute the fact that the Nazis widely distributed the speech in its printed form.

Called for "Fascist State"

One of the earliest and clearest declarations by Deatherage as to his ideas and plans was made in an editorial appearing in the News Bulletin for April 9, 1938: "The time has arrived for a practical and constructive plan of government to be offered to the nation. That plan is that of the Fascist State. None other is strong enough to save the nation from complete destruction at the hands of the international control." As the first step toward a Fascist victory in the United States, Deatherage tried to engineer a unification of all the existing anti-democratic groups and organizations in this country. In 1937, with this aim in view, he called a conference of delegates from all over the States for August 20 at Kansas City, but the representatives of 72 group attending the conference, could not come to an agreement on one supreme Fuehrer for America, and the get-together broke up.

Power Behind Moseley's Throne

Deatherage never sought the nominal Fuehrer-ship for himself. He would rather be the power behind the fascistic throne, he hinted, and he was quite pleased when occasionally he was mentioned by friend and foe as the brainiest and thus most dangerous pro-Nazi in this country. For the throne itself he tried to groom the pompous figure of Major-General George Van Horn Moseley. In May, 1939, he admitted that he was trying to form an organization around a propaganda unit "that can in a few hours be turned into a militant fighting force," and that "the boss" of it was to be General Moseley.

The publicity given to these plans temporarily disrupted them, but through the rest of 1939 and well into 1940 Deatherage has continued his efforts in different ways. He has discontinued his publications, and he has announced that he no longer headed the Knights of the White Camellia, but this was done in an apparent effort to place himself above any single group and thus facilitate his super-organizational efforts at the unification of all the fascistic forces in the United States.

Deatherage is still worth watching.

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FAN DANCE AS NAZI "CULTURE"

At a meeting of the Nazi Bund on May 11 at Ebling's Casino, the Bronx, N. Y., which was attended by a crowd of 800, including 300 uniformed storm-troopers, August Klapproth, a Bund leader, announced that the Bund was going to become a cultural organization. Anti-Semitic songs were sung, and then an introduction to the "new culture" was given -- a fan dance by a scantily attired female. It caused a furore. Some of those present were outraged and earnestly hoped that "the newspapers would not get wind of it."

"Through the Hourglass" by Michael Sayers is temporarily discontinued.

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